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Give them what they want—fast

by Alan Zeichick

comment

Who's the customer? If you think it's the person who forks over cash in exchange for goods and services, you'd rarely know it by looking at most business' home pages.

No, I'm not writing about IBM here; IBM does a pretty good job. Rather, I'm following up on an interesting article (long gone, else I'd give the citation) in a trade weekly like *ComputerWorld* or *InfoWorld*. The story castigated United Airlines on the poor quality of its public Web site.

Think about it. There are a few main reasons why you might visit United online. You might look for flight availability, or to find out how low a fare is. You might want a flight's status: is it early, is it late, which gate will it be parked at? Or you might check your frequent-flier account status.

Go to United's site (www.ual.com). Think you'll find a home page designed around a traveler's needs? Nope. You'll find a screen filled with two sets of icons. One group, labeled "Traveler," has sections called reservations/planning, at the airport, in the air, and upon arrival. The other group, "Airline," has buttons for our company, products/services, Mileage Plus, and gallery. A drop-down menu hides listings for the important items: reservations, e-fares, flight status, flight search, and mileage summary. Whoever that site's intended for, it is *not* the busy traveler. Why must I dig several levels deep to see when Flight 54 is due to land, or to check my mileage account balance? Why is it so difficult to book a ticket? Why must I keep logging in as I navigate around the site?

Nearly as bad is American Airlines. The home page is filled with bogus "news stories" and contests; the information you want is buried, below sparse buttons. TWA is better: a button bar leads to schedules and reservations, frequent flier information, and hot deals, plus travel agents and cargo services. Delta Airlines' page loads quickly, and has quick pointers to important areas but relies on unhelpful drop-down menus, not buttons. America West is pretty good. Southwest Airlines' home page uses a cute image map; it's too slow on a modem connection and the page's text is worthless. But now go to www.travelocity.com or expedia.msn.com. Now those are designed around travelers' needs, with flight information buttons on the home page. The travel portals "get it." I wonder why the airlines don't?

My mission here isn't to talk about airlines, but to talk about *your* Web site. Someone typing in your URL is looking for something. What is it? Make a list of the top ten things people want on your site. Can you put that information on the home page? If not, does your home page make it incredibly obvious that your site has the desired information? How many clicks does it take to get there? If you give your customers what they want, they'll come back again and again. Ain't that better than the alternative?

To change the subject: I'd like to thank Bill Schindler for loaning me his podium this month. I'd like to also thank all of you for the great time I had at the November general meeting (and at Coyote Springs). Have a great New Year! ☺

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The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc (POSSI) is an international organization of computer users with an interest in IBM's OS/2 operating system and related issues.

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Letters

Letters to the editor should be sent to editor@possi.org or mailed to the Phoenix OS/2 Society. We reserve the right to edit all letters for content, readability, and length.



I dunno... Alaska?

I went through your FSM archive and had a little chuckle. I'm tickled to see a group get together for an afternoon on something like this. I've been publishing a bifold tabloid newsletter for three years for the Alaska chapter of the Project Management Institute. It hasn't been near as fun as yours looks.

If you ever get depressed, just think about the poor sap who spends his Saturdays writing the articles then starts at 5:00am Sunday morning to print a mail merged document on the company laser printers, and does all of the folding, stapling, and stamping himself. At 230 copies, the pile is pretty insignificant.

The plus: It's all done using DeScribe, using OS/2 at home and WinNT at work. I've had few problems over the years, most of them with the WinNT office network.

If you hear from any other Alaska OS/2-ers, perhaps you would put them in touch with me. I'd like to meet with others who share my interest in this platform.

Damien Stella

Web Organizer tip

I found a bug in Netscape 4, regarding the way it works with Web Organizer. You cannot drag a Web page object to Web Organizer or the desktop. To create a listing:

1. Right click on a blank area of the page.
2. Select Create URL object. This creates a desktop object.
3. Drag and drop the object from the desktop into Web Organizer.

Brian Crawburg

Mesa 2 experiences

The November 1998 issue of *extended attributes* contained an article by Bill Morrow on the newest release of Mesa 2 from Sundial Systems Corp. I believe Mesa 2 to be the best spreadsheet available anywhere. I would like to briefly share with you my reasons for thinking so.

I use spreadsheets to perform physics research and engineering modelling and analysis. Typically, my projects have several hundred formulas, many very large in size. Each has one or more complex macros, or scripts, to mediate the calculation process.

Mesa 2 greatly enhances my solution constructions. For example, the new version accommodates 702 layers, or pages, in any workbook. Each layer can have as many as 99,999 rows and 18,278 columns. Each cell can accept a formula of unlimited size (I've used formulas containing over 15,000 characters). Finally, Mesa 2 uses REXX as the programming language for scripts. In my opinion, REXX is as

powerful as other scripting languages (Visual Basic, for example), but is more versatile and easier to learn and use.

During the beta test I became intimately familiar with version 2.2. I communicated with Sundial on several problems, including the ones I originally saw in version 2.1.6. Sundial responded quickly to every issue and fixed every one. In the process, I watched Mesa 2 grow from an above-average product with some potential, to a full, strong, fast, and feature-laden spreadsheet. For example, all the standard spreadsheet functions are in version 2.2. The scripting capability is now outstanding. You can customize Mesa 2 to the nth degree to suit individual tastes. Finally, Sundial's technical support and responsiveness is superb; Mr. Morrow made similar comments in his article.

You can do amazing things with Mesa 2. In my article in the July 1998 issue of *The Journal of Computational Physics*, "Solving Integral Equations by Reconstruction in Isomorphic Taylor Coefficient Spaces," I used Mesa 2 to solve the problems presented. The solutions were more accurate and easier to construct than similar numerical experiments using more traditional packages.

H. C. Motin

Could IBM go open source?

I appreciated Esther Schindler's column concerning why IBM won't release OS/2 as open source. I tend to hold this view myself, but I'm going to keep hoping.

It is possible that IBM could make money from "open sourcing" OS/2. I doubt they would be willing to go all out and put OS/2 under the GNU General Public License. But one might make a case for putting it under an "IPL" (IBM Public License), giving IBM the right to incorporate technology contributed from open source into their own proprietary technologies. It would be an attractive option for all parties. It would also be reassuring to corporate vendors, since they would, in effect, still be able to buy an IBM version of OS/2.

End users would have to put up with a few things, like the lack of Win-OS/2 sessions, but that could be circumvented by porting and adding to the development of projects such as WINE.

Of course, the question is then, would this really be OS/2? I don't know.

It coincidentally happens that I'm doing research for a series of articles for *OS/2 e-Zine!* concerning free software and open source software, the GNU General Public License, and how IBM *could*, if they so chose, benefit by making OS/2 (or significant parts of it) open source.

Christopher B. Wright

Weed it and reap

Making successful grass roots organizations

by Esther Schindler

The term "grass roots marketing" conjures an image of positive growth. Yet, like any other growth, the grass in grass roots emerges from a seed. It can be extinguished by weeds, or by lack of proper watering.

It's long acknowledged that OS/2's success (such as it is, or ever was) is the result of the enthusiasts and volunteers who championed the OS, both inside and outside IBM. As IBM's David Barnes said, in a now-famous OS/2-versus-Windows NT shootout at the HAL PC User Group, "It sure wasn't IBM's incredible marketing."

Thus, with our reliance on Team OS/2, user groups, and other grass roots organizations, I thought it was high time to examine how to make a volunteer organization succeed. (Aside from my involvement in the Phoenix OS/2 Society, I have been involved in running three other computer users groups, and I served on the board of user group advisors for the Association of PC User Groups for some years. I've been involved in several other non-computer-related volunteer-run organizations, all of which grew during my tutelage, so I suppose my experience is relevant.)

The advice I give here applies to computer user groups, Team OS/2, usenet communities, and other OS/2 grass roots organizations, but you might also find it useful for managing your local church group or car club.

Keeping the purpose in mind

We exist to help one another. Grass-roots organizations don't rely on a vendor for answers, for support, or for permission to exist. We're just people who depend on one another (sometimes stumbling along awkwardly) as we discover together how to get the most out of the operating system or where to find good applications. Or, perhaps, we just want to find a community of people who don't say, "OS/2? I thought IBM killed that years ago!"

More than anything else, it's our ability to help one another that matters. A grass-roots organization with that viewpoint as its ultimate purpose isn't guaranteed success—but it helps quite a bit.

"Help" can take several forms. It might be providing technical assistance to a member with a multimedia problem. It may be educational activities, such as the general meeting or "how it works" articles here in *extended attributes*. It might be community assistance, working with a local school system to get them on the Internet—and, in passing, show them how OS/2 can be part of their solution. That's all when it works well—and with an essential purpose of helping one another, it usually does.

The danger isn't that the group will forget its focus one day, and find itself supporting Linux or putting the Food

SIG ahead of its purpose of Helping. The danger is in a slow distraction from the group's goals. The same volunteers do the same job, month after month, for instance, so the rest of the membership "lets them" continue... until those volunteers get burnt out or they move away or they can't do it any more. Organizations in which the same officers do everything, year after year, create a stagnant group in which nobody learns, nothing changes, and the joy eventually goes out of the creation.

Because grass-roots organizations are necessarily all-volunteer, the work gets done after hours, and it's usually given a low priority. In our society, the most obvious "reward" is money; when money isn't the motivation to energize a volunteer worker, something else has to kick in.

In the best cases, volunteer organizers truly have the good of the community at heart. When pressed to name other incentives, they view their service as a good way to earn non-financial rewards such as resume-class experience. (For instance, my first published writing was for the Downeast (Maine) Computer Society's newsletter. The experience I gained helped me establish journalistic credibility when opportunity knocked. Others learn management skills, advertising sales skills, or how to speak in front of a crowd.)

In the worst cases, the volunteer's motivation becomes power. Strangely enough, the smaller the "pond," the more power-hungry an individual may become.

It's not always personal power, though. I know of one user group newsletter editor who did a terrible job, but the president said, "We can't fire him; it'd hurt his feelings." That user group no longer existed to serve its membership and to provide the best possible Help available. The group's purpose came to nurture the feelings of only one guy, at the expense of hundreds of paying members. (I wasn't surprised to learn later that user group shrank to a third of its previous size.)

At the top of the organization (such as the board of directors, in a user group), serving the members must be the overriding purpose. It can't happen at the personal expense of the volunteer (losing someone to burnout is worse than an occasional missed board meeting), but excuses of "We're just volunteers, after all," aren't acceptable. You might be a volunteer, but in most grass-roots organizations the membership paid real cash money. The way you help them—and the group—is to ensure that they get their money's worth. Otherwise, they won't bother to renew, or they'll quit attending, or they'll disappear from the group at large.

The folks at the top must never forget that their job is to serve the membership. When things go wrong, the first sign is that matters are handled for the convenience of the board (or other organizing body). Be open with everyone in the organization, despite the added hassle it creates. The organization only exists for the benefit of the members; the board is the servant, not the other way around.

Never refuse help.

Some group members want to help, but may not be right for the job. A member whose writing abilities can charitably be described as "stinks" offers to be the newsletter editor, or an undiplomatic but well-intentioned person volunteers to act as PR chair. Steer them away from jobs that are clearly unsuited to them, but never say, "We don't need your help." Doing so will embitter them, and they'll never offer assistance again. Instead, say, "We have that under control... but you'd be really great at *this* instead." Re-purpose the member, but never refuse his help.

Run it like a business

It's anathema to some folks to think this, but every user group and every volunteer-run organization is a business, even if no money changes hands.

For-profit businesses have to concern themselves with finding new customers (also called marketing), with providing goods and services to customers, and with the day-to-day housekeeping of bill-paying and ensuring that more money comes in than goes out. Grass-roots organizations may not care about the growth of the bank balance, but everything else applies. They have to work to keep existing members (customers) and to entice new ones. They must run events, produce a newsletter, manage a Web site, or provide other valuable services. They have to find a meeting space, pay an ISP, and manage the membership database.

This is the mundane side of grass roots, mind you, but it's completely necessary.

Even if you get everything else right—if you forget to send out the renewal notices you'll lose members, and you'll create ill will besides.

Plus when "you" do any of these things, it has to be from a "we" attitude.

The We Attitudes

For a grass-roots organization to succeed, it's not necessary to be relentlessly upbeat. A fake cheerfulness palls quickly. But it's important not to whine, either as an individual or as a group. Remember that people participate only because it's fun and because they get value from it. If it becomes a burden, they'll stay away in droves.

It can be tough to stay positive all the time (particularly in the OS/2 community), but it's extremely important that the group reject an us-versus-them viewpoint. That way leads to anger and it's never productive.

Instead, put your attention on building bridges, not burning them. Learn the value of alliances, whether it's with other user groups, with the local community, or with the press. Demonstrate how your skills or knowledge or capabilities can help them, and let it be secondary that the alliance benefits your grass-roots organization, too.

But all of these recommendations pale when compared to this last rule: you can never say "thank you" often enough.

Going on gratitude

Grass roots volunteers participate because they want to contribute. The only reward they get is the knowledge that their effort made a difference. That's why it's overwhelmingly important to recognize what people do, to say thank you, and to let them know that they made the world just a little bit better. Among the best things you can say of the human race is that individuals truly want to help one another. (Besides, telling someone he's done great is the most effective way to get more "work" out of him.)

In fact, this is the whole of my "gift" for getting people to volunteer. I notice what people know, and what they're good at. I praise them for the achievement. And then I ask them to share the wisdom or skill with other members. Because my praise is honest and accurate, very few people say No.

Perhaps you think this is obvious. We all love praise, after all. But I tell you that praise is the most powerful force in a grass-roots organization's arsenal.

Appreciation shouldn't be reserved only for big projects. It's the tiny actions, day by day, that make a long-term difference in the survival of the group. People do the right thing for the right reason, and telling them that you noticed can make a world of difference.

For instance, founding POSSI member Brad Montroy attends every meeting he can. But few people realize how much he takes it upon himself to assist the visiting vendor or any out-of-town member. I've seen him drive someone to a hotel on the other side of town, in the opposite direction from Brad's home. That effort is unheard-of, genuine, and usually invisible, but it's part of the reason that the user group has earned such a good reputation. People who visit us learn that we care about them, and it's partially due to Brad's unfeigned kindness.

On the POSSI discussion mail list, Brandon Allbery always seems to be right-there with a reassuring manner and the accurate technical answer. I've noticed that he's always helpful, and never asks for anything. He may not ask for it, but he's certainly earned my gratitude ten times over.

I can go on and on, pointing out the contributions made quietly by Lee Baldwin (who scoped out a storage facility), or the POSSI member who offered to manage a bulk-purchase from PowerQuest. I can remind you that Stan Kropen uncomplainingly picks up the A/V equipment from IBM every month, and makes sure that it's returned after each general meeting... and nobody thinks about the time he spends

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The nerd syndrome

How can you save money when building a new system?

By David Both

two warped

I just built two new computers for my home network, and migrated my network from Token Ring to Ethernet. It was an interesting and fun experience.

Originally, I started with the idea of finally satisfying my wife's plea for a computer that she could do email on. I thought that I would build a couple computers, one to meet her needs and one because I wanted a new system to use as a workstation. I hoped to save some money by building the computers, rather than by purchasing computers that someone else had assembled. Silly me!

Immediately after I bought my first IBM PC (an original PC1 with a 4.77 MHz 8088, 96 KB of RAM, and a single 140 KB diskette drive) I realized that I had not bought enough. Soon, I added a 256 KB memory adapter (that I built from parts obtained by mail order), a second diskette drive, and—when they were available—a pair of two-sided 360 KB diskette drives.

I bought more, right at the beginning, when I purchased my PC AT; I chose 2 MB of RAM and two 30 MB hard drives. Still, I was forced to add memory and other hardware later.

As a result of such experiences, I long ago came to the conclusion that, when purchasing a computer, I would always get the best, most powerful, and biggest that I could afford at the time.

There goes any thought of actually saving money!

Alice wanted the computer to do email and word processing. I wanted one to use as a high powered workstation for graphics, Lotus Notes, network administration, some databases, InCharge, and experimentation and testing.

I also needed to convert the rest of my systems from Token Ring to Ethernet, so that all my systems would have direct access to the Internet. My ISDN router has an Ethernet connection to my local network. I have one computer with one Ethernet and one Token Ring adapter in it. The Ethernet NIC connects to the router, and the Token Ring adapter connects to the rest of my network. Unfortunately, there is no way to bridge between the two adapters so that computers connected to the Token Ring segment cannot access the Internet directly. Since I wanted all my systems to have direct Internet access, I needed to switch to Ethernet.

Because Alice would not need the high powered system that I would, I decided to start by building her system.

A trip to the store

I went to a local computer store, Stay Online, that caters to us nerds. Their prices are a little more than in some other places, but not by a lot, and they make up for it by being extremely knowledgeable as well as friendly and helpful.

They also carry everything imaginable—from screws to NICs to UPSs to complete rack mount systems.

I knew I wanted an ASUS motherboard and a Matrox video adapter. The only issues were which ones. With the help of the store tech, I selected the ASUS P2B AGP motherboard, a 350 MHz Pentium II processor, and a Matrox Productiva G100 with 4 MB of VRAM.

I added a floppy, CD-ROM, 64 MB of RAM, and a 3COM NIC to round it out. The tech helped me select a case for it and I was done—with the system.

I still needed to migrate my network to Ethernet. I purchased a D-Link 8-port hub, Cat5 cables, and NIC cards for the rest of my networked computers. I needed three additional PCI and one PCMCIA NIC cards to accomplish the migration.

Building the system was easy. I had no problems, because the store tech knew which products he sold were compatible with OS/2—another reason to shop at this particular store. I installed OS/2 Warp 4, Fixpack 6, OS/2 Works (for its simple word processor), and NetScape Communicator 4.04.

I connected the system to the hub, then connected my firewall ISDN router to the hub... and Alice was ready to go. A few minutes instruction was all she needed. I set her up with an additional user ID on my IBM Internet Connection service.

That was easy! So the next weekend, I went back to Stay Online and bought a little larger computer for my workstation.

I chose an ASUS P2B-DS dual processor motherboard, but only added a single 400 MHz Pentium II. I also installed 128 MB of RAM, floppy, CD-ROM, and a Matrox Millennium G200 AGP video adapter with 8 MB of VRAM.

This system went together as easily as the first. I installed OS/2 Warp 4, Fixpack 6, DeScribe, Lotus Notes, DB Expert, and many other tools and applications that I use every day.

A new mail server

I installed NetScape Communicator for email and Web browsing, but I still needed to migrate from using Notes Domino for my mail server.

I like Domino as a Web server. And I really like Notes, because it does exactly what I need for me to publish my "DataBook for OS/2 Warp" on the Web. I do not really like Notes for email, but I have been using it for that for a couple years. I wanted to use Communicator for email, but I also wanted to continue using my own SMTP mail server. I like the control that gives me.

I liked what I'd heard about Hethmon Brothers Inet.Mail Pro, so I downloaded the demo version (www.hethmon.com) and installed it. The installation was very easy. After a reboot, I was ready to configure Inet.Mail Pro. With a little help from the on-line documentation, I was up and running. Total time from installation to the first incoming SMTP connection was about 45 minutes, and I was going rather slowly.

Next time

I always learn from these experiences. This time was no different.

Next time I will go back to the same store, because they were extremely knowledgeable about the products they sold. They knew which products were compatible with OS/2, and which provided the best value for my needs.

I like ASUS motherboards. They are easy to configure and install. I had one in another system I bought a couple years ago, and have been very happy with it. ASUS motherboards are not the cheapest out there, but I learned a long time ago that you generally get what you pay for. I would rather pay more for a good motherboard that will last as long as I need it to, than go cheap and have it die on me in the middle of something important.

Matrox video adapters are among the best there are. They are very fast and extremely reliable. Matrox has always had excellent OS/2 drivers and their consolidated OS/2 driver works on all of their boards, which makes locating the right driver a cinch.

I like the overall ease and simplicity of Inet.Mail. I selected the Pro version because of its ability to support multiple virtual domains.

I only have one domain now, but will soon have a second one. I like my current millennium-technology.com domain, but it is a pain for people to type. I am trying to get databook.com, which I think will be easier for people trying to get to the "DataBook for OS/2 Warp." Unfortunately, another company already has databook.com. Fortunately I have trademarked DATABOOK. We will see how well the domain dispute policy works. Not that I really want to, but...

Did I save any money?

I think I did save a little money. I bought exactly what I needed; I also did not have to pay Microsoft (or any other software vendors) for a license I did not want or need.

I've looked at the local advertisements for computers. I could not have bought the computers I did, because they do not exist

in the ready-built market. I would actually have paid more for less.

My real gain, however, was the additional knowledge I obtained from doing it myself. And the fun I had—which is what I think it is all about!

Thanks!

I want to take a little space this month to thank all of the volunteers who have made POSSI and extended attributes a success in 1998. Your efforts have kept OS/2 in people's thoughts for another year.

I appreciate the fact that you have continued your unflagging support for OS/2 despite the fact that other OS/2 user groups are disbanding or changing their focus. Without you, those of us who write about OS/2 would have few opportunities to publish our thoughts and opinions.

You have done much to be proud of, not just for POSSI and for OS/2, but for the personal computer industry as a whole.

Keep up the good work! ☺



Weed it and reap continued from page 5

doing so. I could point out the many IBM staff who still believe in writing the best OS software, and carry the torch inside the company, representing the users' interests. However, I quickly run out of room... and a dozen pages wouldn't contain it all.

The point is that this group—and every grass roots group like it—lives and breathes by what each of us contribute. And I'd like

to thank you all for that, from the bottom of my heart.

As ye sow

It's not always easy to make a grass roots organization survive. Because all participants are inherently equal, and everyone deserves a say, the group can be an anarchy. But then, a profusion of wildflowers is beautiful even if it's uncontrollable and

unplanned.

Water your group well with "thank you" and "you made a difference," and weed out the distractions... and you'll have a garden full of possibilities. ☺

ISDN and OS/2

by Ron Higgen

feature

OS/2 users who sign up for ISDN service are often uncertain what support they need. Fortunately, external terminal adapters (TA) require no special or operating system specific software to work with OS/2.

TA devices have two common classes: "modems" and routers.

When is a modem not a modem?

ISDN "modems," like the Motorola BitSurfer, aren't really modems. They are digital devices supporting direct connection to an ISDN line. People commonly refer to these devices as modems because they attach to a serial (COM) port and respond to the standard Hayes "AT" command set (ATDT, ATZ, etc). Like most true modems, these devices extend the AT commands for setting special options.

Most ISDN modems also offer at least one integrated telephone (POTS) jack for attaching non-ISDN capable analog devices, such as standard telephones and fax machines.

Because they respond to the standard Hayes AT command set, ISDN modems can be used with any communications software that supports Hayes-compatible modems—in other words, just about all dialup communications software. Plus, because OS/2 provides integrated support for serial hardware, you don't need special OS/2 drivers to use one of these devices. However, for performance reasons, you may want to replace the standard OS/2 serial drivers with those contained in a shareware driver package called SIO.

ISDN modems have a downside. The link's speed is limited by the maximum data transfer rate of the computer's serial ports. Most serial ports have enough capacity to handle a single 64 Kbps ISDN B channel, but not enough to handle a bonded (two B channel) 128 Kbps connection. In practice, this may not be a problem; it depends on the bandwidth capacity of the remote systems with which you connect. However, if you plan to connect with one or more remote sites that support bonded 128 Kbps ISDN connections, you won't be able to access the full channel bandwidth using a standard serial port. You'd need a special coprocessed serial port, which costs about \$125.

With the AT command set, ISDN modems let you use just about any dialup communications software. However, many won't connect to non-ISDN devices. If the remote site only has conventional analog modems, you couldn't connect using an ISDN modem. Some newer ISDN modems embed a conventional modem within the ISDN modem box. With these newer devices, you can switch the mode from digital (ISDN) to analog, and connect to both types of modems.

ISDN routers

External ISDN routers typically connect to an existing local area network (LAN) via an integrated, usually Ethernet, network port. The ISDN connection provides any machine on the LAN with concurrent access to the outside world. Even if you don't have a LAN, an ISDN router can directly connect to a single PC via an Ethernet network adapter card.

ISDN routers offer many advantages over ISDN modems, albeit at some additional cost.

First, because the router is connected to a LAN or network card, and because even the least expensive network card provides a bandwidth of 10 Mbps, you have full access to the potential ISDN bandwidth.

Second, unlike ISDN modems, with most ISDN routers you never have to dial a phone number. The router does this automatically, based on the target host (IP router) address received by the device when you attempt to make a connection to a non-local host. Granted, if you connect with several ISDN sites (dial several ISDN telephone numbers), you have a big router configuration job. But most people use their ISDN routers to connect to a single ISP.

Like ISDN modems, ISDN routers don't require any special or operating specific software. You do need an OS-specific software driver for the network card to which the LAN or router is attached.

If you use only TCP/IP based software, you don't need any other software to use an ISDN router. But what if you want to use a standard communications package over an ISDN router link? How would you do that?

The answer is the aforementioned SIO. SIO includes a small component called VMODEM, which lets you define a virtual serial port. The communications software is configured to "dial" (by name) an Internet accessible host via the virtual COM port; VMODEM handles the rest. VMODEM turns the ATDT command into a telnet connection to the remote host. The communications software believes it is talking to a standard modem device.

For example, to use CIMOS2 in this fashion, you set its "phone" number to gateway.compuserve.com (in place of a real telephone number), and the COM port to the virtual port defined by VMODEM. When CIMOS2 dials, VMODEM establishes a Telnet connection to gateway.compuserve.com (CIS's telnet server gateway), and sends the standard Hayes CONNECT string to CIMOS2. Using this method, you can use just about any standard dialup communications program to make connections to an Internet accessible remote site through a local ISDN router device.

Well that's about it. Now you know the options, and the pros and cons of each approach. ☺

Shirley

You don't have to live next door to these folks to get in touch. If your business brings you to the locale of another POSSI member, every so often, well... why not get in touch? Perhaps you can have dinner with a friendly face. That's worth the effort for any traveller, much less for another OS/2 user.

Glen Hudson
ghudso@ibm.net

TouchVoice Corporation,
1749 Potrero Grand Dr, #K,
Monterey Park, CA 91755

City of Industry."

Tony Steczkowski
tonys@eee.org

Jeff Blakley
jblakley@icanect.net

"List me as a contact for the Miami, Florida, area."



Rick Blankenbaker
rickdb@mc.net
815-648-4054

"You can add my name to your listing of geographical SIG contacts. I live near Harvard, Illinois; about 70 miles or so northwest of Chicago, just outside Wisconsin."

Ronald Boschelli
rockypc1@midwest.net

"I currently belong to St. Louis Gateway Users Group. I'm in Southern Illinois, 30 miles due east of St. Louis, MO."

Thom Felton
tfelton@mcn.net

"Probably not many OS/2 users near Billings, Montana but if they contact me we can get together."

Robert Harvey
rharvey@icsi.net

"I'm a new member and would like to host a regional POSSI meeting in Victoria, Texas."

Richard R. Klemmer
richard@webtrek.com

"If people want to get together in this area, and no one else wants to take the lead, I'll be the point of contact and coordinate the effort. If someone else wants to do this, or assist, I'd be very happy." ☺



Dusting off the crystal ball

A wild stab at predicting the future produces a flesh wound

by Dick Krueger

.president

Every year about this time ("this time" being somewhere between the beginning and the end of the year), I dust off my crystal ball. I don't actually "dust" it off, mind you. Usually it takes about half of a bottle of window cleaner to get to where I can make out much of anything.

This year marks a first, though: my predictions appear in print at the beginning of the year.

Anyway, here we go.

My predictions for 1999

January: The new year starts off with a bang when the judge in the ongoing Microsoft antitrust trial, Thomas Penfield Jackson, becomes annoyed beyond control with the way a Microsoft attorney questions one of the government witnesses. Judge Jackson reaches across the bench with his gavel and taps the surprised attorney on the top of the head. Fortunately, the attorney is so thickheaded that he is stunned but unhurt.

In an unrelated occurrence, the Phoenix OS/2 Society thanks all those who've helped to make this organization what it is.

February: Judge Jackson announces that he expects the trial to be over before the beginning of summer.

March: A little-known pencil manufacturer in Tennessee announces and immediately begins shipping a Java-based mechanical pencil that automatically pushes out lead to keep the exposed portion at the optimal level for the user.

April: Microsoft announces an innovative Windows-based ballpoint pen. A built-in program automatically dispenses ink at the proper rate via a browser-based feedback loop. Bill Gates' demonstration of a prototype reminds onlookers of his troubles at last April's preview of Windows 98 when the system crashed. While writing his favorite recipe for peanut butter cookies, the pen skips, then finally quits writing completely. While the pen is rebooting, Bill places it in his shirt pocket and jokes with the audience about beta software. They, however, are mesmerized by the large dark spot that soon appears on the front of Bill's shirt.

Availability of Windows for Pens is promised for the first quarter of 2000. Industry analysts predict that actual shipment will be delayed until at least the third quarter of 2001.

May: POSSI announces free chocolate for all members.

June: POSSI reports that the free chocolate announced in May has mysteriously disappeared while being packaged for delivery at the Schindler residence.

July: As usual, it's hot, so the days continue to expand.

August: It's so hot that nothing moves.

September: POSSI elves are busy preparing for Warpstock, Halloween, and COMDEX.

Also, Judge Jackson announces that he expects the trial to be over before the end of the next millennium.

October: Tens of thousands of participants overwhelm Warpstock 99. Microsoft is so completely stunned that it fails to issue a press release, of any kind, for almost three hours. Two high level IBM executives are given the Heimlich maneuver when they inadvertently learn the news while eating dinner at one of New York's finer restaurants.

It is several days before shell-shocked Warpstock organizers figure out that large numbers of still stoned hippies assumed that Warpstock '99 was the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the Woodstock festival. The attendees unanimously agree that the music is great except for one rap group: POSSI. Fortunately for OS/2 users everywhere, news of the mix-up comes too late to prevent the groundswell of demand for PCs with Warp pre-installed.

November: The newly installed POSSI board of directors declares a general amnesty for all former Windows users who make the switch to OS/2 and publicly acknowledge their former reckless behavior.

December: Shortly before the holidays, Bill Gates calls a surprise press conference. He recounts to the world an unbelievable story of having been visited three times the previous night, by three different consultants. Bill says the three visitors, in turn, showed him computing as it was before Windows, as it truly is for Windows 98 users, and how it will be with Windows 2000. Bill says he is terribly frightened and moved by what he saw. That he longs for the good old days. And that he vows to be a better person.

Bill then calls a young boy with a crutch to the podium. Bill says to the lad, "Tiny Tim, here's a new laptop to replace yours that keeps crashing. This one is very reliable; it has the 'Operating System of the Nineties' installed on it."

Next Bill introduces a Microsoft contractor named Bob Cratchit. Says Bill, "Bob, to make up for all those years without employee benefits or stock options, here's the key to my house. It's yours!" [The key? Not the house? —Ed.]

In his excitement, Bill throws turkeys and boxes of software into the audience. Pandemonium reigns. Soon, though, Bill seems to become overwhelmed with the release of pent-up emotion. He becomes so hysterical that his handlers are forced to remove him bodily. Those who are close enough to hear as he is taken away say that he repeated the same word over and over: "Rosebud." ☹

Dick Krueger is a programming dinosaur. He is willing to tolerate the graphical interface of Warp, but unwilling to tolerate the insipidness of Windows. He longs to live a quiet life with his sweet wife, Sue, and his little dog, too.

Aiming for Simplicity

Learn about Simplicity for Java at the next general meeting

by Esther Schindler

IBM has made a big deal about OS/2's ability to run Java applications with impressive performance. However, until recently, few native Java programs have been available. At least one vendor is promising to reduce that problem, by providing an easy to use development tool suited for both novices and Java experts. At an upcoming user group meeting, you'll be able to judge for yourself how well it delivers.

At the Phoenix OS/2 Society's January general meeting on Tuesday, January 12, Carl Sayres of Data Representations Inc., will show us just how easy it is to put together a Pure Java application, using Simplicity for Java.

Simplicity for Java was a big hit at Warpstock, so you owe it to yourself to find out why. Besides, didn't you make a New Year's resolution to find out more about Java?

About Simplicity for Java

Simplicity for Java 1.1 is written completely in Java 1.1. It runs on any Java-enabled platform including Linux, OS/2, Solaris, AIX, HP-UX, Windows 95/98/NT, Macintosh, and others.

Using the Simplicity for Java IDE, developers build Java applications and applets interactively through a visual model which is instantaneously updated to reflect any changes made to the program's source code. This dynamic modeling reduces development time, promotes programming accuracy, and challenges the need for the traditional three step development practice of code—compile—test.

The Simplicity for Java IDE organizes all of the components of a project, which can include multiple applications, applets, images, sounds, as well as any data files associated with a project. In addition, the IDE relieves the user from worrying about pathnames on a local file system, and on a Web server.

The Composer, Simplicity's graphical interface builder, features a palette of parts that can be added dynamically to the working application. These parts include all of the AWT components and layouts, full support for the JFC/Swing components from JDK 1.2, a library of pre-built JavaBeans, and any desired third party JavaBeans.

Both the novice and the experienced Java developer will

appreciate Simplicity for Java's Code Sourcerer, an integral part of the Composer. In plain English, the Sourcerer interviews the developer and then produces Java source code for the user in response to their choices.

Simplicity's Java Source Code Editor is a fully featured programmer's editor that has all the capabilities that power users expect. Features include unlimited levels of undo and redo, search, and replace using Perl5 regular expressions, color syntax highlighting, and printing in full color.

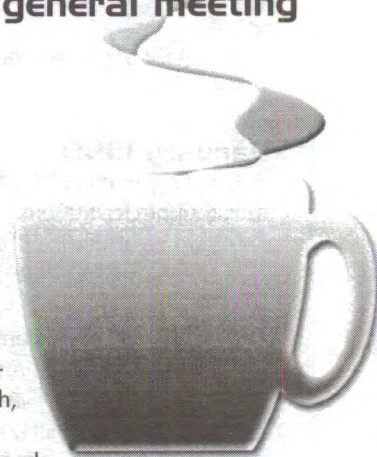
Integrated into the editor, the Sourcerer's Apprentice introspects any Java class on-the-fly as the developer types Java code and provides auto-completion of class methods and fields.

A free tryout version of Simplicity for Java is available from the vendor's Web site at www.datarepresentations.com. The base price for a single license, which includes 60 days of standard email support, is \$149. Both additional standard support, and priority telephone support are available.

When and where

The Phoenix OS/2 Society's general meeting is on Tuesday, January 12. Meetings are held at the Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap. A "random access" Q&A session begins at 6:30pm, and the meeting gets underway at 7:00pm.

Visitors are quite welcome, particularly at this meeting. After all, if Java can live up to its promises as a cross platform tool, quality development applications will make it possible for all of us computer users to work together. ☺



what

- Data Representations showing Simplicity for Java.

where

- Mtn Preserve Reception Center
1431 E Dunlap
Phoenix, Arizona

when

- Tuesday, January 12, 1998
- 6:30pm: Q&A session
- 7:00pm: Regular meeting

Coming events

A list of events scheduled by the Phoenix OS/2 Society and other OS/2 user groups.

.history

January 1999

5 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for February issue. Articles

should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

12 General meeting; Data Representations showing Simplicity for Java. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

13 Tampa Bay Java Users open house. IBM Services Center, Lake Pointe One Building, 3109 W Dr Martin Luther King Blvd, Tampa FL. Contact timb001@ibm.net.

14 Monterey Park CA Geographical SIG. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. TouchVoice Corp, 1749 Potrero Grand Dr #K, Monterey Park. Contact Glen Hudson, gihudso@ibm.net.

23 Board meeting and magazine prep. Meeting is 10:00am to 1:00pm. Eat a brunch, learn about the inner workings of the Society, and help get extended attributes ready to mail. Location: Bill and Esther Schindler's house in north Scottsdale, 9355 E Mark Lane. Call 602-585-5852 or send email to esther@bitranch.com for directions.

30 Miami FL Geographical SIG. Contact Jeff Blakley, jblakley@icanect.net for time and place.

January						
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 1999

2 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

3 Tampa Bay Java Users open house. IBM Services Center, Lake Pointe One Building, 3109 W Dr Martin Luther King Blvd, Tampa FL. Contact timb001@ibm.net.

5 Magazine submission deadline for March issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

9 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

27 Board meeting and magazine prep.

March 1999

2 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for April issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

9 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

27 Board meeting and magazine prep.

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 1999

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

6 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

13 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

24 Board meeting and magazine prep.

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 1999

4 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for June issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 602-585-5852.

11 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

22 Board meeting and magazine prep.

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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30						

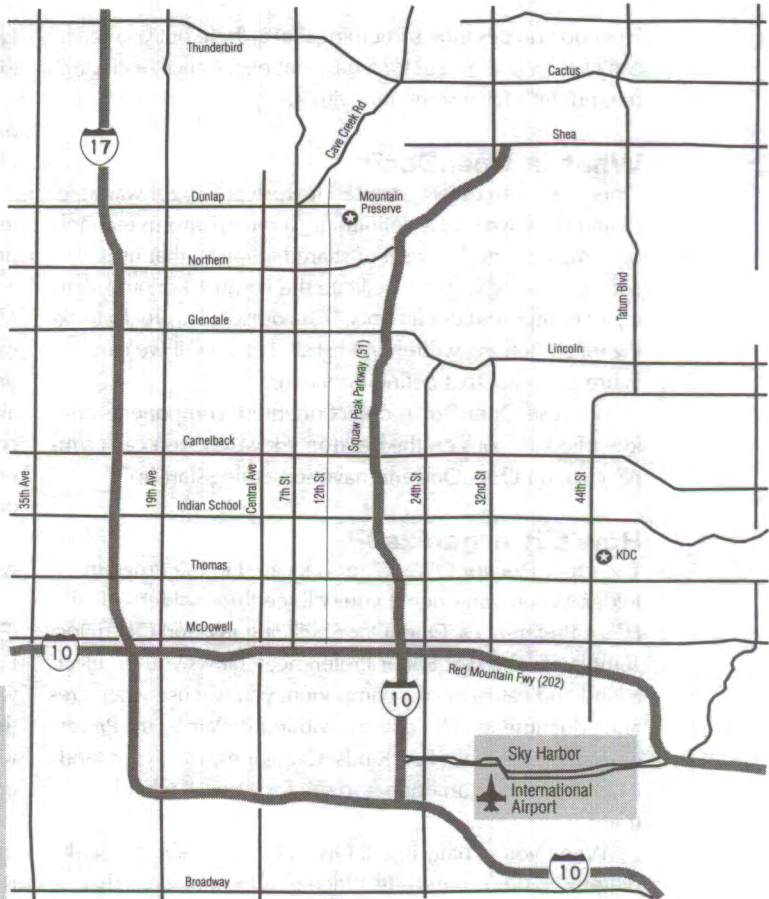
Meeting locations

Directions to meeting locations.

General meetings are held at the Mountain Preserve Reception Center, 1431 East Dunlap, Phoenix.

From the Black Canyon, exit at Dunlap and head east. From the Squaw Peak, exit at Northern. Go west to 12th Street, turn right, go north to Dunlap, turn right, and it's two blocks up on the right.

The "How OS/2 Works General Interest Group" and the Internet SIG (net.sig) meet at Knowledge Development Center, 2999 N 44th St, Suite 400. That's just north of Thomas, in the building with the green dome. Plenty of free parking is available in the garage behind the building. ☺



If the mailing label on the back cover says "sample" then this may be the only copy of *extended attributes* that you will ever receive. If you want to keep getting the magazine (and receive all the other benefits of membership), you must join! A 12 month membership in the USA is only \$30. (See the form for membership pricing in other areas.) Tear out the application, fill it in, and mail it with your membership fee today!

I made a little list

by Esther Schindler

In all likelihood, you're familiar with listservs. You write to an email "group" to which people subscribe, and the messages are automatically distributed to all the listserv members. A listserv usually focuses on a specific title, from issues of interest to OS/2-based ISPs (os2-isp@stat.com) to fans of particular a capella singing groups (netfobs@lists.best.com) to... well, perhaps you get the idea. Lists can have just a few individuals or thousands of subscribers.

Listservs can be open (any member can post), or moderated (one person approves each message before the system disseminates it). Often, the list also offers a "digest version"; you're sent one long message (containing the day's activity) instead of individual-email messages.

The Phoenix OS/2 Society maintains two listservs for its members. The announce@possi.org list is a moderated list

used for bulletins ("Until Friday, Vendor X has a special price for members"). The list discussion@possi.org is where we discuss OS/2 topics, from technical support issues to thoughts about what the latest IBM action means. The announce list has only a few messages per month; the discussion list can have 40 or more messages per day.

The lists are meant for POSSI members only, but we haven't been very good about letting new members know how to sign up (often we don't have their email IDs) or excluding nonmembers. We don't try too hard, on the latter, because many lurkers eventually turn into members.

So we leave it to you to sign up manually. Visit www.possi.org/lists.htm (not visible from the home page!) and fill out the form. If you ever want to unsubscribe from the listserv, you can use the same form to do so. ☺

Opening up OpenDoc

by Marilyn Pizzo

How do you describe something that is there but you really can't see? We are all in for a different experience, including me, but let's have some fun with it.

What is OpenDoc?

OpenDoc is an object oriented feature of OS/2. I was able to find somewhat of a definition: "a multiplatform technology, implemented as a set of shared libraries, that uses component software to facilitate the construction and sharing of compound documents." Of course, I was really looking for something written in English. Let's see if we can figure out what that definition means.

Because OpenDoc is object oriented, components are identified as icons on the desktop. However, you can't simply click on OpenDoc and have something start up.

How's it organized?

The OpenDoc for OS/2 folder is located in the Programs folder. When you open it you will see three folders—Part Editor Preferences, OpenDoc Shell Plug-ins, and OpenDoc Templates. The Part Editor Preferences allows you to select a kind and category of a component you will use when creating documents. The options within the Part Editor Preferences notebook are Part Kinds, Categories, File Types, and Extensions. You can open it to see for yourself what is there.

When you initially install OpenDoc for OS/2, the Shell Plug-Ins folder is empty. Its function is to hold icons that represent components added after the initial install including components you create. The OpenDoc Templates folder will have at least three components: 2D Graphics, Page Layout, and Text Part. They function like other templates in OS/2. The 2D Graphics component allows you to design line drawings, shaded areas, and different types of bar graphs. You can create backgrounds from bitmaps using the 2D Graphics component. You can also create graphics with captions by embedding 2D Graphics with the Text Part component. Working within this component is accomplished by using the toolbar, popup menus, and the menu bar.

The Page Layout component gives you the opportunity to organize your document as a desktop publisher might. Using an icon bar and pull down menus, you can set margin width, page numbering, headers and footers, and page orientation. It also flows components from page to page in a multiple page document. You can use a Page Layout as a root component if your document is more than one page and you need to number the pages consecutively. Page

Layout allows you to view your document the way it will look when printed. The other components don't allow that.

Following are the Properties settings required when organizing a document using Page Layout: Colors, Margins, Grid, Rulers, Page, and Header-Footer.

The Text Part component allows you to create simple text documents within OpenDoc somewhat like a word-processing application might. This component is done primarily in ASCII text, but it supports RTF format also. The ASCII text format is provided as well as RTF so the content can be read by other OpenDoc components which do not understand RTF format text. The Text Part component allows text to be wrapped around the shape of Graphics components or other embedded components. If an embedded component is moved, the text will be automatically reformatted. You can also resize the component at any time. To work within the Text Part component you would use popup menus and the menu bar.

Enough terminology already!

I can see already that we will have some fun with this once we learn a little more. Some terminology might give us a little better understanding of what is going on. This is the stuff we do need to learn about before we can start creating documents and making use of the feature of OS/2.

When a component is active, the menu bars that are unique to that component will be visible, its content editor is active, and its Properties notebook pages can be used. Whenever you activate a component, the menu bar choices available change to correspond to the functions needed for that component. An active component has a highlighted frame around it. When you click on the frame, the component becomes selected. A component must be active before its content can be selected. When you select an embedded component, the component it is contained in will become active. Only one component can be active at a time within a document.

We keep mentioning components, but what are they? They are the basic parts of an OpenDoc document. A root component acts as a big container to put other components in. The standard OpenDoc components are: Page Layout, 2D Graphics, and Text Part. We will get more involved with them as we progress.

Let's try this stuff

To use a component, drag its template from the OpenDoc Templates folder into an existing OpenDoc document or onto the Desktop. Then you can double click on the icon to open the component. Sounds easy enough. When you

make the component active, the Edit, View, and Help menus correspond to the specific component. The menu bar is unique. You will notice the Page Layout component has a Page menu. The Text Part component has a Selected menu. The 2D Graphics component has an Options menu.

If you do any writing, you might save some of the drafts and date them for later reference. OpenDoc does not create drafts automatically. Since drafts are copies of previous versions of your OpenDoc document, you can keep track of the revisions you make by choosing Create draft from the Document menu Drafts choice. A Draft history window shows basic information such as Icon view, Title of draft, Draft version number, Name of draft creator, Date draft was created, Time draft was created, and Comments. The draft history will not include the current document. If you want to edit a draft document you must copy it to the Desktop or clipboard and make the changes there. Creating a draft is not the same as saving the document itself.

Embedding is the process you use to build compound documents within OpenDoc. Dragging and dropping and using the Paste and Paste as options from the menu are the two ways components can be embedded. Components can be embedded into documents as well as into other embedded components. You only need embedding if you are creating a compound

document. A Graphics object can be embedded into a Text Part component. You can see where this is starting to sound a little like a mini-word-processor—almost a desktop publisher.

The Root component is the foundation of the OpenDoc document. Root components control features of your OpenDoc document, such as the way your document is printed or the number of consecutive pages you can have in your document.

To work with an embedded component, you must select it. The highlighted border of the selected component is used for moving and resizing. You can also select specific data within a component that you may want to edit. You can select multiple components as long as they are within the same root component. If a 2D Graphics component and a Text Part component are both embedded in the same Page Layout component, both the 2D Graphics and the Text

Part components can be selected at the same time.

Again, activating and selecting are different here. An active component has its frame displayed and its functions are present in the menu bar. When you select a component within an embedded component, the unique menu bar items of the selected component become available. To select a component: press and hold down the Shift key; click on the component; release the Shift key. To select multiple components: press and hold the Ctrl key; click on each component you want to select; release the Ctrl key. To select an active embedded component, click on the highlighted component border.

This gives you some information to digest and me a chance to “play” with OpenDoc some more. Next time, we can get into really using OpenDoc and having some fun. ☺

THE

OS/2 SUPERSITE

<http://www.os2ss.com>

- Over 2 gigabytes of OS/2 shareware and freeware
- Mailing lists such as OS2USER and WarpCast
- Home of several popular OS/2 web sites such as OS/2 e-Zine!, EDM/2, OS/2 Connect, Loren Bandiera's OS/2 News and Rumors Page, and Timur Tabi's New OS/2 User page.
- The OS/2 Discussion Forum
- Online shareware registration and commercial software purchasing

Join the Supersite Members Club

Club members get special deals on commercial software and \$2.50 off every shareware application they register through BMT Micro. Members also get FTP access to the Supersite archive and space for their personal web page. See <http://www.os2ss.com/club/> for details.

Volunteers!

by Bill Schindler

feature

The Phoenix OS/2 Society is an all-volunteer organization. Every job, from president to editor to occasional gofer is performed by someone who volunteered.

We recognize that, in any volunteer organization, some tasks can grow to be thankless. Unfortunately, we sometimes miss saying "thank you" to someone who lends a hand for a moment, or even to the most visible volunteers. Thus we have made it tradition to take a moment every January to thank everyone who has helped in the past year.

Looking back

The Phoenix OS/2 Society was originally an OS/2 SIG, started by Bill and Esther Schindler, under the auspices of the Phoenix PC Users Group. The SIG eventually outgrew the user group and the goals of the SIG began to conflict with the goals of the user group.

The Society was founded in August 1994. The first general meeting was held at the end of August and almost all of the old OS/2 SIG membership joined the Society at that time. Four and a half years later, almost 80% of the original membership are still members!

This past year has been a mix of ups and downs for the Society (as well as for OS/2). Membership dropped during the first part of the year. However, since May, membership has been slowly increasing to the point that the Society is now bigger than it was at the beginning of the year.

The board and officers

These are the people who are on the front lines, visibly running the organization, and often invisibly spending time in business meetings every month. You see most of them at the general meetings and their names appear in every issue of the magazine. They manage the myriad details of keeping the Society running smoothly, including organizing meetings, paying the bills, processing the mail, and answering membership questions.

The board of directors and officers during the past year include:

- Lee Baldwin
- Stan Hall
- Evelyn Hitch
- Dick Krueger
- Sam MacDonald
- Judy McDermott
- Marilyn Pizzo



- Esther Schindler
- Bill Teags
- Julian Thomas

extended attributes

The most visible service of the Phoenix OS/2 Society is its monthly magazine, *extended attributes*.

The magazine is the collective work of a large number of volunteers. The two people at the center of the magazine are Bill and Esther Schindler, who handle most of the work involved in collecting articles, editing, layout, and producing artwork.

Over the years, the magazine has won several awards in the Intergalactic User Group newsletter contest and from the Association of PC User Groups. The most recent award was given in November for layout.

extended attributes started as an eight page newsletter in August 1994. It became a magazine in January 1996. At the end of 1996, the Society decided to try to fill the publishing void created by *OS/2 Magazine* ceasing publication. In January 1997, approximately 10,000 promotional copies were mailed to former subscribers of *OS/2 Magazine*.

extended attributes is now the only English language hard-copy magazine focusing on OS/2.

Every month, board meetings and the final preparation of the magazine are combined in an event known as FSM (for "Fold, Staple, Mutilate") by the regular attendees. The entire process of labelling, bundling, and sacking 700-plus copies of *extended attributes* takes about two hours. (It's not all work, though. One of the other FSM features is the quantities of food and coffee consumed at the potluck brunch.)

Many people other than board members and officers show up to lend a hand. Mike Briggs deserves special thanks, since he picks up the magazine from the printer and hauls the boxes to FSM every month.

The many volunteers who have contributed in the past year by writing, editing, drawing, and proofreading *extended attributes* include:

Elliot Abramowitz, Marc Abramowitz, David Ameiss, David Azarewicz, Rick Blankenbaker, David Both, Mike Briggs, Kim Cheung, Ernie Fisch, Joel Frey, Terry Alan Fuller, Powell Gammill, Daniel Goggia, Brian Grawburg, Craig Greenwood, Richard Klemmer, Richard Knapp, Stan Kroppen, Dick Krueger, Daniel Lonergan, Susan Malling, Dr Allie Martin, Judy McDermott, Chuck McKinnis, Stephen

G. Mican, Bill Morrow, Tom Nadeau, Frank Pizzo, Marilyn Pizzo, John Sandercock, Bill Schindler, Esther Schindler, Armin Schwarz, Peter Skye, Burke Swanson, Bill Teags, Julian Thomas, John Urbaniak, Pat Van-Horn, Gwen Veneskey, Rick Widmer, John Wubbel, Doug Yriart, and Alan Zeichick.

Warpstock 98

This year, because Warpstock was in Chicago, we didn't have as many volunteers available to run the booth. However, due to the efforts of Dick Krueger, Evelyn and Roy Hitch, and Esther Schindler, the Society sold many shirts and back issues of *extended attributes*, and grew by over 40 new members.

Warpstock 99 bid

In October, the board of directors decided to explore bidding on Warpstock 99. Sev-

eral officers immediately stepped forward and began researching hotels, dates, and other issues.

Since then, Mike Willmoth and Jean Coddin have joined the Bid Committee.

Additional thank yous

Thanks to Robert Rosenwald for taking on a truly thankless job: processing all of the credit card payments.

Thanks to Burke Swanson and Lee Baldwin for leading the Q&A session before the general meetings.

Thanks to Mike Briggs for more than three years of being Webmaster.

Thanks to Evelyn Hitch for checking the voice mail, and staffing the check-in desk at general meetings.

Thanks to SIG leaders and helpers Mike Briggs, Lyle Wilson, and Stan Kropen.

Thanks to the many people who help out on the POSSI discussion mail list.

Thanks to Adcraft Printing for the many times they've gone beyond the call of duty and gotten the magazine printed on a ridiculously tight schedule.

Users helping users

The core purpose of any user group is "users helping users." Society members help in hundreds of ways: answering an OS/2 user's question, carrying boxes, writing an article, giving someone a ride to the meeting, staffing a booth, etc.

To each and every one of you, *thank you!* You are the reason the Phoenix OS/2 Society continues to exist! ☺



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The last year of the millennium

Counting down to year 2000

by John Wubbel

Well, here we are: 1999 has arrived. Yet, the count down to the year 2000 started long before we celebrated the current new year, at least for those of us thinking about computer software problems in the year 2000 (Y2K).

OS/2 application users probably wonder what effect the rollover will have on their current investment, and whether a problem will interrupt their lives. OS/2 developers probably wonder if their software and support will be impacted. Both groups have different perspectives, but not necessarily the initiative to find out the answer.

In search of compliance

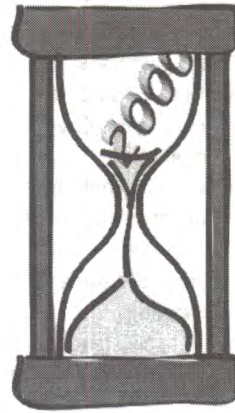
End-users typically turn to a publisher's Web site to search for statements of Y2K software compliance. However, before a publisher can make a statement about its product's readiness and its ability to run without fault in a year 2000 production environment, developers and quality assurance people must conduct testing to prove its worthiness. In large companies, this must be accomplished without impacting current business operations. This can be very tricky, because extra computer systems are not usually available for testing.

Consequently, a great deal of thought needs to be given to the approach and methodology. In most cases, the quality assurance and testing groups are responsible for the testing efforts. Generally, it is not as simple as setting the computer's clock forward to January 1, 2000, running the program, and then reporting the problems or defects to the developer.

How does a company go about answering this question for consumers and end-users? IBM uses a comprehensive approach on mission critical systems. The approach has three objectives to prepare a company's software assets for the year 2000. Once an inventory of assets has been completed, the following needs to take place:

- Test those applications thought to be Y2K ready.
- Remediate applications or systems thought to be not Y2K and those which failed Y2K readiness testing.
- Integrate Y2K readiness into the firm's application development efforts and production environments.

Newer applications, less than a year old, may have been developed with Y2K problems in mind; hopefully, pitfalls were avoided. However, the applications probably have weren't run on platforms where the date was moved forward. Thus, testing applications that are thought to be ready is a requirement.



The term *readiness* implies the question, "Can the application correctly process dates in the Year 2000 and beyond?"

In other words, it's an approach whereby an application goes directly into a Y2K test environment, bugs are found, fixed and retested. You'd have to go back to a current dated machine and do regression testing. *Readiness* infers that fixed code would go into production at midnight on December 31, 1999. Of course that is not practical with complex systems, as they must be in place before we celebrate the new millennium.

Remediate means that points in the code where a problem was found will be resolved or corrected. Typically, the code is scanned for patterns such as date formats, masks, or keywords (like date or year). Before testing, problem areas in the code can be identified in a read-through by peer programmers. *Remediation testing* is a process that tells us if the application still functions as it did prior to the "find" and "fix" phases. This testing happens using the current date within the current production environment. In later testing, the date is set to year-2000, whereby remediated cases are tested in a simulated future-dated production system. This approach is common with legacy code because we expect fewer test case failures once the system clock is set forward.

Because systems currently in production cannot be interrupted, the code that was remediated and tested for Y2K readiness must be integrated into the development process or existing production environments. Some of this is made easier if your version-control system is properly administered. The roll out to production is partly determined by the volatility of the application, and sometimes the term *retrofit* is used for the process of incorporating any production changes.

Other environmental factors

Other environmental factors must be considered: will non-IT assets function correctly in the year 2000? For example, a telephone switch is probably not an IT asset. But, data coming from the switch directly impacts information systems owned by the IT department. It is an external interface or input containing a great deal of data that is the life blood of the telephone company.

Infrastructure: "Is the hardware and software platform Y2K ready?" This is extremely important. In the perfect utopia Y2K environment, everything must be at a complaint

level if we expect the application under test to function without fault. You must look at the entire package. On the software side, an inventory of third party software that is crucial to your application must be identified. The tester can go to the vendors and to compliance statements or to obtain a patch to upgrade the target Y2K test system. Something as simple as license expiration might prevent a test from taking place. This is what retrofit means to a production environment.

After the Y2K testing is completed, the test plan should document what development needs to do when rolling out the Y2K ready application. What version levels of third party software are required? Third party software includes everything from the operating system and database management systems, to the compilers used in building the application. Anything that your

application can not live without needs to be in place. While you are not testing the third party software per se, it still needs to be Y2K ready.

End results

And finally, along with infrastructure we look at "Industry." Do external interfaces function correctly? The output from your application may be a customer bill or tax form. It could also be summarized data deliverable to another organization beyond the IT department software asset domain. In any case, the test cases should cover these limits.

As a case in point, an application delivered data to another division via FTP by transferring files containing the data. Nothing was wrong with the data, but the file naming convention used a date in the filename. A piece of code was remediated and

the programmer ensured that a four digit year would be in the filename. The only problem was that the party on the receiving end could not handle the slightly longer filename. While this seems fairly trivial, the proper functioning of the end results is as important as data coming into the application.

Test plans

I discussed the approach to Y2K testing. Similarly within systems, test approaches are defined for each application. *Test approaches* is synonymous with test cases. In other words, there are two test plans to be written.

The first is the Remediation Test Plan, which defines the test cases derived from the remediation and fix stage. These test cases are first run without the fix, to get the baseline result. Once the fix is made, the

continued on next page

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test case is run again to see if the expected results differ from the baseline. These two test runs use the current date.

The second test plan is the Y2K Test Plan. Both test plans document the testing strategy, to facilitate the orderly execution of test cases that leads us to a high level of confidence regarding the readiness of the application.

The testing strategy is most often dictated by the architecture of the application. For example, the local power company has a system where several components make up the application for the owning or end-user group. Raw data comes into the system from the electric meters. A process running on a server groups and summarizes by inserting the data into a database. The end-user group uses a graphical front-end program to maintain the database and generate invoices for customers. A third process runs

independently, generating reports and a hard copy bill, as well as backing up the data for the last billing cycle. The grouping and summarization has to complete before end-users can begin working on the next billing cycle. An understanding of the database, its entity relationships and business processes, whether the billing cycle is date based or simply cyclical, all factor into the procedures that make up a testing strategy. The strategy also includes the run dates and test conditions. The table outlines the dates and conditions that test cases typically cover, if applicable for the particular application.

This normally becomes evident once the analysis of the code has been completed. Sometimes a context diagram of the application or system is helpful in describing the test strategy. In most circumstances, Y2K testing goes through many iterations, partic-

ularly if several run dates are necessary. In an effort to organize the work load, test cycles might need to be defined for a multi-part test strategy. The table is a guideline for Y2K testing of standard run dates. Run dates are based on logic seen in the code.

In conclusion, the objectives outlined above go a long ways toward preparing a system for the year 2000. It does not mean an application is perfect. A problem might still develop, however it should be less of an impact to resolve going into the new millennium. ☺

TABLE 1. A guideline for Y2K testing of run dates

Test type	Test conditions	System clock date
System integrity	General operation	199x
		01/01/2000
		02/29/2000
		03/01/2001
		+28 years
	No value for the system date will cause interruption in desired or expected system operations.	
Date function: arithmetic	Calculate duration between dates.	
	Calculate date based on starting date and duration.	
	Calculate day of week, day within year, week within year.	
	Calculations involving forward or reverse date projections.	
Date function: branching	Compare two dates.	
Date function: cosmetic	Dates on reports and I/O displays.	
Date function: data storage	Storing and retrieving.	
	Sorting and merging.	
	Searching.	
	Dates embedded in key fields.	
	Indexing on file/database.	
Date function: extended semantics	"99" as special value for "end of file" or "no end date" or other multipurpose use.	
Date function: format	Convert date between representations (YMD, Julian, etc.)	
Interface: external	Files/data passed to/from external entities.	
Interface: internal	Files/data passed to/from internal entities.	
Recovery: general operation	Recovery procedures: recognize and process proper files/backups.	

Building Better Web Pages

by Richard Klemmer

Review

When I first read the back cover of Rebecca Frances Rohan's *Building Better Web Pages*, I wasn't sure that the book could deliver on its promises. Ms Rohan promises to show you how to make your Web site do more without learning programming, to make your site professional looking without going to design school, to save time and money, and to work smarter instead of harder. This seemed like a pretty tall order. I was skeptical at first, but I decided to keep an open mind, and I'm glad I did.

The book's topics range from page layout and site navigation to images and sound. It even touches on using pre-made Java applets, Javascripts, and plug-ins. Most of the focus is on the overall look and feel of the Web Site, and creating and modifying images. Although this isn't an HTML tutorial, throughout the book Ms Rohan includes refreshers of pertinent tags.

One of the book's strongest parts is the section on page elements, layout, and navigation. Although much of the book is common sense, many Web sites ignore the rules the author sets forth. Also, throughout the book, Ms Rohan stresses standards. She believes that Web Sites should be accessible to everyone, no matter what operating system or browser is used.

I really liked the first chapter. The section that discusses HTML standards and browsers should be a must-read for anyone involved with developing a Web presence. Not just for those doing the actual HTML coding, but everyone contributing, including management.

Also, the chapter on Web marketing and dealing with the press has information not only for Web developers, but for anyone who might need to send press releases to the media. In fact, the chapter has good insights about dealing with the press in general, something we in the OS/2 community could probably do better.

Building Better Web Pages also has well over a hundred links to images, sounds, and Java applets, as well as applications for HTML editing and image manipulation for most platforms, including OS/2.

On the down side, in a few places Ms Rohan got a little too simplistic, such as describing how to type an asterisk,

However, this over-simplicity didn't happen often enough for it to become a real distraction.

One thing put me off, at first. Occasionally (especially when discussing images) the author spends a great deal of time explaining how to do things on Windows and using

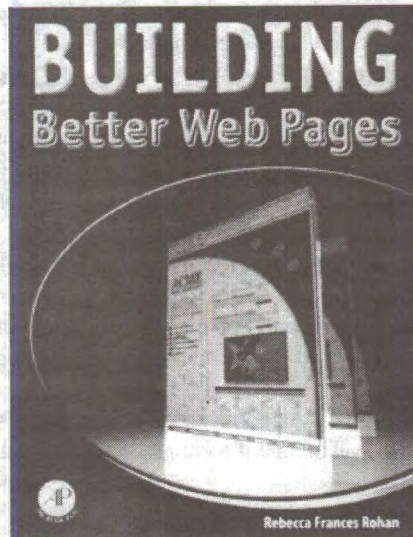
Windows applications. However, she does say that things should be similar to other applications on other platforms. As I looked closer at what she was writing, I found that, although it would take a bit of work, most of the techniques she described could be used with the image design software on any platform.

The main target of this book is the intermediate Web designer. It would also provide useful information for beginning and advanced developers. Although this is definitely not a book for beginners, I think it is something that everyone involved in Web site development would find useful. This book does not cover Web program-

ming, such as CGI, Java, or Javascript, but I think the person who will get the most use out of it is someone who comes to the Web from a programming background.

This book delivered on its promise to help build better Web pages. The author's style of writing was very easy to read. She could also be humorous at times, without being overly "cute." Although this isn't the only book you should have as a Web developer, it should definitely be included in your collection. ☺

By day, Richard R. Klemmer is a programmer for the US Department of Agriculture. The rest of the time he works for WebTrek L.L.C., an Internet Consultant. He can be reached at richard@webtrek.com.



Building Better Web Pages

by Rebecca Frances Rohan
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Every month, I pore through product announcements and press releases, looking for information of interest to OS/2 users. Mostly, I grab what information I can find and edit it into readability (subtracting the more gratuitous chest-beating), but the job is harder than it ought to be.

You'd think that OS/2 software authors would have learned, by now, how to write a simple product announcement. It's a pretty basic job: tell the reader what the product does, why they should care, how much it costs, and where to get it. But many vendors (particularly smaller ones) just don't seem to figure out what's needed. I see announcements like "new version of Foo available, download it from this Web site" with no indication of what Foo is, does, or what new features were added. Or the product author produces a laundry list that includes every bug fix; I suspect they cut-and-paste it from the code's change log.

When you correspond with OS/2 product authors, do us all a favor and point out that they can find resources on "how to write a press release" (such as Alan Zeichick's "Widget Release" example) that will benefit the entire community. Okay?

In the meantime... if you see something here that interests you, consider writing a review for *extended attributes*, and contact reviews@possi.org. I've already grabbed one product off the list, the OS/2 Tarot Card application, because I want to peek into the future to learn if the product announcements will get any better, over time.

Electronic Teller 3.12

Electronic Teller is a home finance application which features a rich set of functions and utilities, including:

- Multiple-user support, and multiple account support.
- A configurable check printer, supporting user-defined designs and multiple check-per-page printing.
- A wide assortment of reports, from budget to transaction reports, with a variety of subtotalling options.
- Budget tracking and graphs.
- Transaction fee or service charge tracking.
- Imports and exports Quicken QIF files.
- International currency support, including currency conversion.

Registration: \$40. Available at BMT Micro.

Bubblepad

Bubblepad 1.03 is a replacement class for the launchpad in OS/2 Warp 3 and 4. It offers flyover help for the buttons and reduces the pad size by reordering buttons and offering an option to hide drawer buttons. New in this version:

- Setup strings ease automatic installation.

- Replace/unreplace utility for the WPLaunchPad class.
- Bubblepad fits seamlessly into the WPS. Full online help is provided. NLS for German and English.

This package is released under the GPL; full source code is provided. Get further information at www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Sector/5785/bubblepd.htm.

CDRecord/2

CDRecord/2 is a port of the Unix CD-burning program `cdrrecord`. You can burn single session-, multi-session- or audio CDs.

CDRecord/2 is a text mode application. To create a CD image, you need `mkisofs` or a similar program.

CDRecord/2 only supports SCSI-recorders. The application is released under the Gnu Public License (i.e. free). Get further information at www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Sector/5785/index.html.

IBM's XML parser

On the IBM Java download page for IBM's XML Parser, the text says that the parser will work with any Java 1.1 or higher platform, including OS/2. Find more information at www.software.ibm.com/xml.

UPS Monitor

UPS Monitor monitors the status of APC Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS). It provides shutdown services to the operating system, and performs a scheduled shutdown and restart (if the feature is provided by UPS model). It's designed for a single workstation environment.

UPS Monitor supports APC models Back-UPS, Back-UPS Pro, Smart-UPS, and Smart-UPS v/s (NET and Matrix possibly too).

Registration: \$15. Available at BMT Micro.

VyperHelp

VyperHelp 1.01 (prerelease) is a visual outline and editor for creating online help for OS/2-based systems. It generates IPF files, which can be compiled into OS/2-based HLP and INF files. VyperHelp has:

WYSIWYG text editing with codes revealed, powerful outline tree controls, and support for keywords, indices, and symbols. You can import IPF and WinHelp (HPJ) files, and export IPF and C header files.

A prerelease of VyperHelp is available free until January 31, 1999. You'll find it at <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/dev/help/vhelp101.zip>, and in the CompuServe OS2DF1 forum, library 8 (Development Tools).

For more information, email MekTek at mek@compuserve.com or fax 651-649-0237.

Semtex

Semtex is a clone of the "Dynabusters" game for the Atari ST/STE/Falcon. The game is very simple, with only one rule: bomb away all your opponents!

You lay bombs and kick them over walls. Use smokebombs, fast bombs, and shields. Sounds like just the cure for a hard day at the office.

Registration: \$25. Available at BMT Micro.

FTPIFS

FTPIFS is an FTP client that acts as a file system driver. With FTPIFS, you can map an ftp host to a drive letter.

FTPIFS has directory caching support, and automatically reconnects to hosts. It has partial file memory caching (for small files only). In the registered version, FTPIFS also includes metadrive support; you can map many hosts to a single drive letter.

Price: \$25. Available at BMT Micro.

Applets (for Java)

Applets contains Java applets with classes. Many have source code. This CD also has Java standalone applications, tools such as Java development kits, a Java to C translator, Java compilers, and tutorials for Java programmers. The interface requires Netscape 2.0 or better.

You'll get cute buttons, animations, radio boxes, a calculator, Tetris, blackjack, a Web client, GIF browser, and more.

It costs \$15.99, and is available at BMT Micro, as a shrinkwrapped CD-ROM.

Jolt! Java Games

The Jolt! Games CDROM has 72 of the latest game applets, which you can use on your own Web pages. It also includes source code for many of these applets.

Become a better Java programmer by reusing or learning tricks from this source code. You can navigate through the CD-ROM with your Java-enabled Web browser.

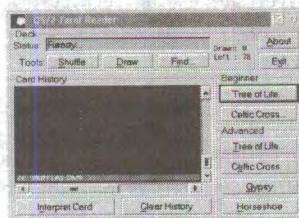
Price: \$24.99. Shrinkwrapped retail package at BMT Micro.

Gotcha!

Gotcha! is a small OS/2 utility which captures windows, window interiors, parts of

the screen or the whole desktop. It saves the image to disk or clipboard as a picture (in OS/2 bitmap format).

Gotcha! is malware (i.e. if you keep it, you send the author a postcard). Find out more at www.informatik.uni-trier.de/CIP/thielen/gotcha.



OS/2 Tarot Reader

With OS/2 Tarot Reader, you can read the Tarot deck and get assistance at interpreting cards and their positions. It is very simple to use, and suitable for advanced or novice Tarot readers.

OS/2 Tarot Reader displays the Tarot deck in the Gypsy Spread, Celtic Cross Spread, Tree of Life Spread, and the Horse-shoe Spread.

Registration: \$20. Available at BMT Micro.

Squeak for OS/2

Some guys at Disney, yes Disney, are trying new things with the Smalltalk programming language. One is called Squeak, and lo and behold, there is an OS/2 port. Squeak is an open, highly-portable Smalltalk-80 implementation whose virtual machine is written entirely in Smalltalk. It's free, with a liberal license.

The direct port is at: www.sugarweb.com/squeak/ports/os2native/OS2English.htm and the one optimized for OS/2 (called Cheese) is at: www.plugin.ru/~squeak. The main Squeak page is at <http://squeak.cs.uiuc.edu>.

PMfax SOHO LAN

Keller Group, developer of the PMfax and FaxWorks OS/2 products, now has a special LAN version which supports Windows, NT, and OS/2 workstations for small SOHO LAN situations. This provides

LAN fax sharing at a very attractive price of just \$299.

The new product allows "shared mode" use of the fax hardware by up to five other workstations, and the workstations can be any mixture of Windows, NT, or OS/2 machines. The fax server can be any OS/2 machine on the LAN. This is ideal for SOHO configurations where privacy, routing and other advanced features of the regular PMfax LAN products are not needed.

All PMfax products are now available for electronic ordering and delivery through the Keller Group web site at www.kellergroup.com.

PhotoTiger

PhotoTiger is a program for editing digital photos and pictures. It can load and save pictures in BMP (1, 8, 24 bit), JPEG (8, 24 bit), and IMG (1 bit).

Most of PhotoTiger's tools and actions need 8 bit gray or 24 bit color pictures. PhotoTiger will automatically convert 1-bit or 8-bit color pictures for you.

Price: \$20. Available at BMT Micro.

InJoy Firewall

The InJoy Firewall is OS/2 software designed to provide multiple gateway and firewall capability to consumers, small businesses, and large enterprises.

The InJoy Firewall runs on a computer with the Internet connection, and acts as an Internet Gateway for the other computers on your private LAN. It's designed for LAN-to-LAN configurations, including cable modem, ADL, and ADSL connections.

Price varies by user count, but starts at \$20. Available at BMT Micro.



EmTec FTP Client 5.05

The EmTec FTP client version 5.05 is an updated and enhanced release of the FTP client which is included in the EmTec Network Suite. EmTec FTP is a 32 bit multi-threaded PM based FTP client and is fully WPS aware. With the EmTec FTP client you can drag and drop files, resume broken transfers, and run multiple copies of the program.

FTP sessions and login information can be saved on the fly for later access. Full support for firewall is included.

New in this release:

- Options to *not* show Server Phonebook when EmTec FTP starts.
- Tree-like server phonebook and bookmarks menu.
- Window submenu in control panel includes all opened connections.

Registration: \$30. Available at BMT Micro.

Magician

The Magician interface is an implementation of OpenGL for Java. Using Magician 1.1, programmers can write portable Java code that seamlessly uses existing native OpenGL libraries to provide high-performance rendering over a variety of platforms: UNIX, Win32, OS/2, and Apple Mac.

It can be found at www.arcana.co.uk/products/magician/download.html.

SiteSurfer

DevTech's SiteSurfer provides searching and navigation capabilities for Web sites, networks, and local files. Use SiteSurfer to find information or to navigate through complex sites—and provide these capabilities to other users of your information.

Written in Java for portability to any platform, SiteSurfer requires neither special knowledge nor special capabilities (such as CGI, ASP, or JSP). Anyone with access to a Web site, information stored on a network, or documents on a hard disk, can use SiteSurfer.

Users visiting a site with the SiteSurfer applet package installed can quickly locate their desired information. A user interface guides you, step by step. You can index local and remote information, even through a proxy. The flexible embedded search engine provides many ways to search the data indexed, depending on which options were made available when the index was

built. You can locate documents by Title, Author, Description, Keywords, textual content, etc.

The SiteSurfer Applet is 100% Java, and is compatible with Java 1.1 or later.

SiteSurfer is \$47 for the personal version, and \$190 for the server version. See DevTech's Web site, www.devtech.com for more information. It's available at BMT Micro.

Weasel

Weasel is an OS/2 POP3 and SMTP daemon. Weasel controls which users may send relay mail, and can block mail from specified hosts.

A POP3/SMTP server is useful if you want to set up email accounts for more than one person on your computer. Set up an OS/2 machine as the mail server for your office. Or establish separate email addresses for your children and your cat.

Keep in mind such a server is useless unless your computer is always online. Otherwise, your correspondents will get lots of bounced mail.

Price: \$20. Available at BMT Micro.

OS/2 Netlabs: free apps

The OS/2 Netlabs has released several free OS/2 applications, and is working on others. Here's a brief update of what's currently available.

The new version of CandyBarZ, a desktop utility that changes title bar appearance, is at www.netlabs.org/candybarz.

Yuri Dario released a new version of mSQL for OS/2, which should fix several minor problems with the current version. The mSQL database is available at www.netlabs.org/projects/msql.html.

GIMP 1.02, a high-end graphics application, is available for OS/2. The team is working on porting the GTK (Gimp ToolKit) to OS/2, allowing GIMP to be compiled in a native OS/2 version (using PM instead of XFree86).

Netlabs is looking for programmers. For example: EAGLE is a layout editor and autorouter that is available for OS/2 and is free for educational use. Unfortunately, new versions will not support OS/2 anymore, because the ZINC toolkit they use is not available in a native OS/2 version. The ZINC authors are willing to let the OS/2 community do the port. If we can port the current

version of the toolkit, there is a chance to again get a native OS/2 EAGLE. If you're interested in helping to port ZINC to OS/2, send a message to ktk@netlabs.org. (EAGLE is available at www.cadsoft.de, and ZINC is available at www.zinc.com.)

PersonalJava Web Browser

Espial Group Inc. announced the release of Espial EEscape v1.2, a pure Java Web browser with a core footprint of less than 120K. This browser has been developed for restricted memory, low storage space and diverse visual display environments. Espial EEscape boasts full support for HTML 3.2, forms, frames, tables, applets, animated gifs and zooms for diverse visual displays.

Espial EEscape v1.2, specifically developed to meet the needs of minimal resource environments, is ideal for use in Internet devices like PDAs, smart phones, set-top boxes, network computers, handheld and other mobile electronic devices.

For more information on Espial Group's products, visit www.espial-group.com; send email to contact@espial-group.com; or call 1-888-4ESPIAL or 613-230-4770.

Larsen Commander

Larsen Commander is an OS/2 file manager with built in command line and scrollable console monitor. It's inspired by the grand old Norton Commander for DOS and the great File Commander for OS/2. Here's a few of the many features included:

- You can SET environment variables directly in the shell.
- Built in command line commands: PUSH, POP, R, SET, +++, TAG, WHICH.
- Built in extended attribute viewer.
- Smart program launching.

You can download the current release at <http://home.sol.no/~leilarse/lcmd/index.html>. ☺



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